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BISHOP ENGLAND'S DISCOURSE.

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THE
SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE HALL OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONGRESS OF THE
UNITED STATES,

IN THE

CITY OF WASHINGTON.

ON

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 1826.

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN ENGLAND, D.D. ✓
BISHOP OF CHARLESTON.

Baltimore:
PUBLISHED BY F. LUCAS, JUN'R.
No. 138 Market street.
1826.

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DISTRICT OF MARYLAND, TO WIT:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on this twentieth day of January, in the fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Fielding Lucas, Jr. of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"The substance of a Discourse preached in the Hall of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, in the city of Washington. on Sunday, January 8, 1826. By the Right Rev. John England, D. D. Bishop of Charleston."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to the Act, entitled "An Act supplementary to the Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

PHILIP MOORE,
Clerk of the District of Maryland.

JOHN D. TOY, PRINT.

PREFACE.

I cannot send out the following pages, without stating the manner in which their publication has been caused. This will, I trust, excuse the many imperfections which must be discovered by those who peruse them.

Duty called me for a few days to the City of Washington, and some of my friends were kind enough to procure from several members of Congress the expression of their wish that I should preach for them. Having the permission of the Archbishop of Baltimore to do duty in his diocese, and having been permitted by the Chaplain of the House of Representatives to occupy his place, I consented.

Being well aware that some of the topics treated of in the following pages, were not generally well understood in the United States, from the want of opportunity, and that amongst some of the best informed, and the best disposed citizens, I had frequently found serious mistakes as to the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church in their regard; I believed I would be aiding in the promotion of good feeling and harmony by using the opportunity thus given to me, in fairly explaining those mistakes. I therefore took them up in the order in which they appear.

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After the discourse, my friends informed me that I had given satisfaction, and on the next day I received the following note from a number of members of Congress, with no one of whom I believe I have had the honor of an acquaintance. Mr. Condict informs me that it was the result of accidental conversation amongst some of the gentlemen who have signed it, and I must take this opportunity of making to him my acknowledgments for his kind communications.

To the Right Rev. Bishop England,

SIR,

We were gratified in hearing the discourse delivered by you yesterday, in the Representatives' chamber, and our gratification would be much increased by perusing it.

If not inconsistent with your views, we would respectfully solicit its publication, in such manner as may be most agreeable to yourself.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

EBENEZER TUCKER, N. J.	LEWIS CONDUCT, N. J.
JOSHUA SANDS,	AARON HOBART, Mass.
J. SLOANE,	THOMAS WHIPPLE, N. H.
JOSEPH VANCE,	JAMES WILSON, Penn.
C. A. WICKLIFFE, Ky.	B. BASSETT,
ENOCH LINCOLN,	A. STEWART,
ADAM R. ALEXANDER, Tenn.	GEORGE WOLF,
WILLIAM McLEAN,	G. MITCHELL, H. R. Md.
SAMUEL SWAN, N. J.	WILLIAM BURLEIGH,
D. TRIMBLE	PHINEAS MARKLEY,
	NOYES BARBER,

Washington, Jan. 9th, 1826.

To this very kind application, I sent the following answer.

To the Hon. Messrs. Condict, Hobart, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

I have just received your very flattering request, that I should publish the sermon which I delivered yesterday in the Hall of Representatives.

I should very gladly comply immediately therewith if it was in my power. But I have not written, nor have I taken a note of my discourse.

I understand that some gentleman who was present took notes, I shall endeavour to discover if such was the fact, and with the aid of his manuscript I should easily be certain of being substantially correct. Otherwise I should only be able to give such an outline of my argument as would bear a similarity to what I delivered.

My duties call me hence immediately. But I shall do what lies in my power to meet your wishes.

I have the honor to remain, Gentlemen, with respect and esteem.

Your obedient humble servant,

†JOHN, *Bishop of Charleston.*

Monday, Jan. 9th, 1826.

As I was obliged to leave Washington, I requested of a friend to procure for my inspection and correction, the copy made out from the notes of the gentleman who I was led to believe took them, but on Thursday I was informed that no notes had been taken. And as my delay in this city was to be very short, and my desire to comply with the request sincere, I lost no time

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in putting my recollections of what I had preached in writing. I believe the following pages will be found substantially correct, and this simple narrative, will I trust, plead my excuse for much defect of style, and want of decoration, as I was not able to wait to revise what I have thus sent to press, more to gratify my friends, than to exhibit myself.

† JOHN, *Bishop of Charleston.*

Baltimore, Jan. 16th, 1826.

DISCOURSE.

My Brethren,

THE peculiar circumstances in which I find myself placed in this respectable assemblage, are to me the cause of some embarrassment; for I look upon the situation in which I stand to be one of extreme delicacy.—I am the minister of a religion professed by a minority of our citizens; standing, by the permission of the pastor of a different communion, in accordance with the wish of some of my friends and their associates, members of the legislature of this nation, to address you upon the subject of religion. Whilst I know that I ought to speak freely, I also feel that I should avoid any unpleasant reference to those differences which exist between persons professing Christianity, except where the necessity of the case would demand such reference. And I am fully aware, that as I am the first clergyman of the church to which I belong, who has had the honor of addressing you from this chair, it must be generally expected that I would rather speak upon some of the peculiarities of my own faith, than content myself with giving a discourse upon any general topic, that as being common to all, would be to you matter of no special interest.

But in order to arrive at the particular ground of this description, it will be necessary at first to examine the general principles of our religion: through these the avenue lies, and through that we must proceed. Upon those general principles, I presume I shall be found to accord with the great bulk of my auditors; though I cannot hope that they will all agree with me in my de-

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tails, or rather in my conclusions.—I shall then commence, by examining what religion is; that from this examination we may arrive at the proper place for making our farther inquiry.

Religion is the homage which man owes to God.—This, and this only, is religion; every thing is embraced in this principle; no detail is excluded from this definition.—Man's duty to God is, then, religion. Thus to know what man's duty is, we are brought to examine his nature—that nature is two-fold—spiritual and corporeal—the spirit superior to the body, more perfect than the body: the first duty of a religious man is to worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth.—But to know how this spiritual worship is to be paid by man to his Creator, we must learn of what man's spirit consists, or rather we must see what faculties it embraces. The first faculty of the soul is the understanding, by which we discern truth from error. Man is bound to worship God by his faculties; his leading duty is then to worship God with his understanding; and the great province of the understanding being to discriminate between truth and error, man's primary religious obligation is to labour for the discovery of truth, and to adhere to what he shall have thus discovered. Truth and falsehood are not, therefore, matters of indifference—man's obligation is to adhere to truth, and to reject falsehood; the exertion of the understanding for this purpose is then our first, our highest duty: to neglect this is criminal. This investigation for the discovery of religious truth is the duty of every human being; each person is bound to inquire to the best of his power; and he who neglects or overlooks his obligation is inexcusable.

But it is not enough that the understanding is enlightened. It is not for the mere object of being acquainted with speculative truth, that we should inquire. The second faculty of the soul is the will; its determinations are formed with perfect freedom; generally upon the knowledge which has been acquired; hence the discovery of truth should be pursued, for the purpose

of regulating the determinations of the will; and the homage of this faculty is paid to the Creator, by continually determining to act according to the law of reason, as it has been discovered after sufficient inquiry.

Moreover, we feel within ourselves, and all mankind testifies to a similar experience, that after such a result we do not always act as we have determined. The allurements of the world in which we live, mutual example, and a variety of affections, desires and passions, interfere between the determinations of the will, and the carrying of those resolutions into effect. But it is our duty to withstand those allurements, not to be misled by example; to regulate our affections and desires, to keep our passions in subjection to our reasonable determinations, and thus to do in all things the perfect will of God, which must accord with the great rule of reason.

Man is not wholly a spirit; he is also a material being; having a body, and living in a visible world, where his fellow creatures are also in bodily existence: he owes to his Creator external homage with that body, as well to pay to the author of his whole being the worship of all its parts, as to give evidence to others that will, at the same time, satisfy them of his acting with due respect to the great Father of all, as also to excite his brethren to religion, by his own good example. Pure unbodied intelligences who worship before the throne of the Most High, in spirit and in truth, pay the homage of their whole being in mere spiritual adoration, because they are altogether and exclusively spiritual in their nature. Man, made less than the angels, bears about him a body which he has received from the creator of his soul;—the dissimilarity of their natures destroys the analogy by which it might be sought to establish, that his worship should be in all things similar to that paid by a spirit having no material parts joined in his nature.

The plain result of these considerations must be, that it is our duty to exert our understanding for the discovery of truth, to frame the determinations of our will

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according to ascertained truth, and to carry those determinations into effect, to bring our affections into accordance with reason, to keep our passions under proper restraint, and to pay to God external homage. This is what we call natural religion; for it is what nature and reason exhibit as our duty.

If God never revealed his will to man, we should have those great principles only for our guidance to the fulfilment of our obligations to our Creator. But two questions naturally present themselves to us: did God ever make special communications to any of our race? And if he did, could such revelation destroy or weaken the force of the principles of natural religion?

To the last question an immediate answer may be unhesitatingly given. No revelation made by God can destroy or weaken the force of those principles. On the contrary, such revelation must not only be in accordance with them, but would tend rather to strengthen them, and to give more precision to their application. God, the eternal truth, cannot be inconsistent with himself. Truth cannot be contradictory to truth. Human reason is a spark emanating from the great fire of eternal truth; though extremely limited, yet it has proceeded from the infinite Deity: its slender ray may too often imperfectly exhibit what lies around us in the dark labyrinth through which we journey to the grave; and the same objects would be more fully exposed to view, and more distinctly understood, if the effulgence of the Godhead poured its brilliant flood around. The objects then, by either light, would still continue unchanged, though their appearance would in each case be materially altered. What human reason clearly and fully discovers cannot be known otherwise by the intelligence of God, and his testimony by revelation would still accord with his testimony by human reason; but too frequently we are disposed to conclude, that we are well acquainted with what we very imperfectly know, and we assert that reason testifies where it does not. Hence there is created an apparent conflict between what we say our

reason testifies, and what we state that God reveals. But the great duties of natural religion are equally enforced by both. If we should find that God did make a revelation, there will not be any thing found in that revelation to weaken the principles of natural religion. The first principle of each is, that man is obliged to exert himself for the discovery of truth. In a state of mere nature we would have only the testimony of our own reason; in a state of revelation we have the additional aid of the testimony of God. Although the one is more extensive and more perfect than the other, still there can be no conflict between them. Daily experience ought to convince us, how limited is our knowledge. Yet our pride urges us to think that we can be acquainted with even the secrets of the Godhead. We certainly are not, and cannot be bound to believe without such evidence as will be sufficient to satisfy the mind. That evidence must be the exhibition of truth to our own reason, or our perfect satisfaction that we receive the testimony of God. Without this evidence no man is bound to believe. The humblest individual who walks the earth has not been subjected by his Creator to any dominion which can enthrall his intellect; he stands before his Maker as independent in his mind as does the brightest intelligence which scans the perfections of the Deity, and glows in the raptures of his vision. It is true that we are made lower than the ministering spirits who surround the throne of heaven. Yet we are not made subject to them. Nor is any man's mind made subject to his fellow man. But we all are upon this ground made originally equal; all bound to believe God when he speaks, all bound to admit his infinite knowledge, to testify to his unerring truth, and to pay the homage of our submission to his declaration. Every creature must bow every faculty before the Creator, but to the Creator alone. Thus we find the fundamental principles of revealed religion to be, that man is bound to pay to God the homage of his understanding by believing him when he makes a revelation. This belief is

Faith; that is, the belief upon the testimony of God, of truths or facts which unaided human reason could not discover. And since we should exert ourselves to discover truth, we cannot be excused from making the inquiry as to whether God made a revelation, and if he did what were his communications. Nor can it be to us a matter of indifference whether we take up truth or error for regulating the determinations of our will. If it was not beneath the dignity of God to stoop for the instruction of man, it cannot be a degradation for man to raise himself to learn from his Creator. It is his duty to learn and to obey. The view then given by us of revealed religion is that it consists in believing God when he teaches us, and in obeying him when he commands us, and of course adhering to his institutions. Whatever is the necessary consequence of this great principle we say is religion. Any thing which is not embraced in this is not religion. It may be superstition, it may be fanaticism, it may be infidelity, it may be folly; but it is not religion. Faith then is not folly, it is not abject slavery of the mind, it is not visionary fanaticism, it is not irrational assent to unintelligible propositions; but it is believing upon the testimony of God what human reason could not discover, but what a provident and wise Deity communicates for the information of our minds and the direction of our will.

And surely there are a multitude of truths which are known to God, and whose discovery is yet beyond the reach of our limited faculties! We are surrounded by mysteries of nature; we observe innumerable facts, not one of which has yet been explained, and many of which would be almost pronounced contradictions, although known to be in co-existence—man is himself a mystery to man—yet the God who formed his body, and created his soul, plainly sees and distinctly understands all the minute details of the wonderful machine of his body; and is well acquainted with his vital principle: the nature and essence of the soul are within his view. He is lifted above the heavens; his days are from eternity

to eternity: he pervades all space; his eye beholds the worlds which roll in the firmament, and embraces the infinite void; all things which exist are exposed to his vision; whilst man, the diminutive speck upon a spot of creation, scarcely distinguishes the objects which dimly show within his confined horizon: shall he presume to say that nothing exists beyond the narrow precincts of his temporary prison? Or, if the God of heaven declares some of the riches which lie scattered through his works. If he vouchsafes to inform us of his own nature, or of ours, that our relations might be more specifically understood; our hopes more clearly founded; our zeal better excited; our determinations better regulated; and our acts be more suitably, and simply, and satisfactorily directed, shall stunted little man presume to say that perhaps he is deceived, because he has only the testimony of God, but not the testimony of his own reason? Does not his own reason tell him that God neither can be deceived, nor can he deceive his creatures? Thus his own reason informs man, that the testimony of God, making a revelation, is the very highest evidence of truth—the surest ground of certainty.

It might sometimes happen, that what is found to have been testified by the Deity, contradicts what would appear, to some individuals, to have been ascertained by the process of their own reasoning. One principle is plain; God cannot err, man frequently has erred, and is perpetually liable to mistake. If then, we have certain proof of the declaration of the Creator, there can be no difficulty in arriving at the reasonable, the practical, the correct result: that result is again our great principle—it is the duty of man to believe God when he testifies; and the simple inquiry will be regarding the question of fact, “has God testified?” If he has, our doubts must cease; our belief is demanded by reason and by religion. Indeed, they are never opposed to each other; upon patient inquiry they will always be found mutually to aid each other. The history of the world presents to us the exhibition of the weakness of the human mind—perpetually changing its theories;

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continually adding to its stock of information; frequently detecting its own mistakes; correcting its aberrations, and proving its imbecility, whilst it asserts its strength. The Eternal God, infinite in his perfections, is always the same; in him there is no vicissitude; alone, changeless amidst a changing universe; his vesture and decoration he might change, but he is eternally the same, in his knowledge as in his truth: the heavens and the earth may pass away but his word cannot fail.

We are thus brought to the simple inquiry concerning the fact of a revelation. The truth of a fact must be always ascertained by testimony: that testimony must be such as ought to be sufficient to produce conviction of truth before belief can be reasonably required. When that sufficient testimony has been adduced, to withhold belief would be unreasonable—unreasonable rejection of evidence, where there is no question as to the revelation of God, cannot be innocent. The refusal to examine is plainly against the first principle of religion; contrary to the plainest maxims of reason. A mistake honestly made is pardonable, but the rejection of evidence must be irreligious.

In examining whether revelation has been actually made, we are met by a variety of preliminary difficulties, before we are permitted to enter upon the evidence of the fact; but I should hope that a few plain observations would easily remove them. As I give but a very imperfect outline of the ground of proof, respecting this head, my object being rather to hasten forward to some specialties regarding that particular church in which I have the honor of being a minister, than to dwell upon the general ground which is common to us all, they must be few. But there is a philosophy, which endeavours to stop our progress at this pass. Philosophy did I call it! No—I was wrong to dignify it with that appellation. It is a species of perplexing sophistry, which, clothing itself in the garb of rational inquiry asks a thousand questions, to which neither itself nor philosophy can answer with satisfaction; they are questions which bewilder the mind, but cannot assist the understanding: they are fully

sufficient to show the weakness of our reason, and to teach us to distrust ourselves because of the imperfection of our faculties; but urged too far, they might force us to conclude, that we should make no exertion, because we are not omnipotent; that we should make no inquiry, because we cannot elucidate all that is dark; that we can have no certainty, because there are some cases of doubt; and that we have no information, because there is some knowledge beyond our reach. That certainly does not deserve the name of philosophy which would only fill the world with doubts, and conjectures, and probabilities, instead of knowledge of fact founded upon evidence of testimony. Sophistry, having led you from your plain path and bewildered you in a labyrinth, by turns smiles at your folly, sheds the tear of mocking condolence for your degradation, and sneers at your baffled efforts to extricate yourself: but calm and dignified philosophy unfolds to you the plain evidence of facts; and having fully established the truth of the fact, draws thence the irresistible conclusion: thus leading in a way in which even fools cannot err: this is the path of religion.

I may be asked, when will man know that he has evidence of fact; and how shall he know it. There are some questions which are more plainly answered by our conviction than by any induction. The feeling of the evidence is so strong that we can by the very expression of the feeling, testify to others what they know because they too feel as we do, and they know that we should, by any attempt at inductive proof, make perfectly obscure that which without this effort would be fully and confessedly evident. Ask me, how I know that I have evidence of light being now diffused around me; how you have evidence that I now address you; how we all have evidence of our existence;—who will undertake, by any process of reasoning, to produce a stronger feeling of conviction than exists by the very feeling of the evidence? Nor have we any form of expression, which could carry more conviction to the mind, than that which announces the feeling itself;

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each individual will know when that feeling exists within him. No speculation will aid him to the knowledge of the fact; and where the general testimony of mankind is given to the existence of this feeling, it cannot but have an intimate connexion with truth. If it had not, the God who formed our nature such as it is, would have placed us under a delusion from which we could not be extricated, and the assertion of this not only would destroy every criterion by which truth could be distinguished from error, but would be blasphemy against the Creator of the universe.

Let us come to view how we ascertain the fact of revelation. If there is any special work which is so peculiarly and exclusively that of an individual, as that it can be performed by no other, the fact of the existence of that work establishes the fact of his presence; and if his presence is a testimony by him of his concurrence in declarations then made, he is responsible for the truth of those declarations. We believe miracles to be works above the power of created beings, and requiring the immediate presence and agency of the Divinity, and given by him as the proof of his commission to the individuals or societies whom he makes witnesses to men of truth revealed by him. The feeling of the miracle being evidence of his presence for this purpose is so general, and its testimony so fully given by the human race, as well by their spontaneous declaration, as by their whole course of conduct, that it would argue in our Creator himself a total disregard for man's information if he permitted its existence during so many centuries, and with such inevitable results, unless it was a criterion of truth. The same consequences would necessarily follow from a permission on the part of God of a general delusion of mankind as to the species of works that were miraculous. When the feeling generally existed, and was acted upon most extensively during a long series of ages, that works of a peculiar description were emphatically miracles, and that the performance of those

miracles was an undoubted proof of God's presence to uphold the truth of the declarations made in his name by the agents or the instruments used in these works: the Author of our nature would be chargeable with aiding in our delusion, if he did not as he could, and as his perfections would demand, interfere to correct the error.

Our next observations must regard the quantity of testimony which would be required to prove one of those miraculous facts. The assertion has sometimes been made, that more than usually would suffice for establishing an ordinary fact, would be necessary to prove the existence of a miracle. We altogether dissent from this position. The facts in the one case are precisely as obvious to examination as in the other. Strange as the assertion which I am about to make, will probably appear to many who have honoured me with their attention; I plainly say, that it will be found upon reflection, that there is far less danger of deceit or mistake in the examination of a miraculous fact than there is in one of ordinary occurrence. The reason is simple, and I believe natural and evidently sufficient. The mind is less liable to be imposed upon, when its curiosity is greatly excited, and when its jealousy and suspicions are awakened, than when it is prepared to expect and to admit what it is daily, perhaps hourly in the habit of expecting and admitting. Ordinary events excite no curiosity, create no surprise, and there is no difficulty in admitting, that what has frequently occurred, occurs again, the statement of such an occurrence will easily pass. But the state of the mind is widely different, when we eagerly seek to ascertain whether what has never been witnessed by us before, has now come under our observation, or whether we have not been under some delusion; whether an attempt has not been made to deceive us. We in such a case become extremely jealous; we examine with more than ordinary care, and we run less risk of being deceived or mistaken.

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No person doubts the power of the Creator, the supreme legislator and preserver of the universe, to suspend any law of nature in the course of its operation, or to select some individual case which he will except from the operation of that law, and during his own pleasure. The question can never be as to this power, as to the possibility of a miraculous interference; but it always must regard the fact, and that fact must be established by testimony, and without the evidence of testimony, no person who was not present can be required to believe. There does not, and cannot exist, any individual or tribunal, with power to require or command the humblest mortal to believe without evidence.

There is no place in which the rules of evidence are better understood, or more accurately observed, than in our respectable courts of law. Permit me for the moment, to bring your attention to one of those cases which frequently presents itself to the view of our citizens.—There stands a citizen charged with the murder of his fellow man. Long experience, deep study, unsullied purity, calm impartiality, and patience for investigation, form the judicial character; they are found upon the bench. Steady integrity, the power of discrimination, the love of justice, a deep interest in the welfare of the community, and the sanction of a solemn pledge to heaven, are all found in the jury; the public eye is upon them, and the supreme tribunal of public opinion, after an open hearing of the case, is to pronounce upon the judges and the jurors themselves. The life or death, the fame or infamy of the accused lies with them, and is in their keeping, at the peril of their feelings, their character, their conscience and their souls. The decision must be made by the evidence arising from testimony, and that the testimony of men, and those men liable to all the weakness, and all the bad passions of humanity. Yet here, in this important case, a solemn decision must be made. That jury must be satisfied, that the person now said to be dead was living, that he is now dead, that the change from life

to death was produced by the act of their fellow citizen now arraigned before them; that this act was done with sufficient deliberation to proceed from malicious intent; that for this act he had no authority; he who was deprived of life being a peaceable person under the protection of the state. In this there is frequently much perplexity, and little testimony, and that testimony frequently regarding not the substantial ingredients of the crime, but establishing facts from which those that form the ingredients are only derived by inference. Still we find convictions and executions, and the jury with the approbation of the bench, and the assent of the community, unhesitatingly put on solemn record their conviction of the truth of facts which they never saw, and of which they have only the testimony of their fellow men; and upon this testimony society agrees that property, liberty, life and fame shall all be disposed of with perfect assurance of truth and justice.

I will now suppose that court constituted as I have described, and for the purpose of ascertaining the fact of murder. A number of respectable witnesses depose to the fact of the person stated to have been slain having been alive, they were in habits of intimacy with him, were his companions during years, some of them have seen his dead body, in presence of others who also testify to their having seen and examined that body, those last were present when the prisoner with perfect deliberation inflicted a wound upon the deceased. There can be no doubt as to the identity of the deceased, and there is none as to the identity of the prisoner. A number of physicians testify their opinion as to the wound so given, and which they examined, being a sufficient cause of death. The accused produces no authority for his act; there has been no process of law against the deceased, who was a peaceable and well conducted citizen. How could that jury hesitate? They must, painful as is the task, they must consign the unfortunate culprit to the just vengeance of the law—the judge must deliver him to the executioner, and the public record of the state must exhibit his infamy.

Life and character must both disappear; they are swept away by the irresistible force of evidence, founded upon human testimony. The widow must hang her head in shame; in the recess of her dwelling she must sit in lonely, disconsolate, unsupported grief; the orphans blush to bear their father's name; the brothers would forget their kindred; and perhaps even grey hairs would gladly bow still lower, than compelled by grief and years, to court the concealment of the grave.

Yet, still, when fact becomes evident from the examination of testimony, we must yield our assent to that fact without regarding its consequences.

Let me continue my supposition.—Before the dissolution of that court—whilst it is yet in session, that jury still occupying their seats—a rush is made into the hall—the same identical witnesses appear again; but they are accompanied by the deceased—now raised to life:—They testify, that as they were departing from the court, a man, whom they produce, proclaimed that he was commissioned by the Most High to deliver his great behests to his fellow men; and that to prove the validity of his commission, he summoned them to accompany him to the tomb of that man whose death they had so fully proved, and that by an appeal to heaven for the authenticity of his commission, that man should revive. They went—they saw the body in the grave—the claimant upon heaven called upon the eternal God to show that he had sent him to teach his fellow men—he calls the deceased—the body rises—the dead has come to life—he accompanies them to the court—he is recognized by his acquaintances—confessed by his friends—felt by the people—he speaks, he breathes—he moves, he eats, he drinks, he lives amongst them.—Can that court refuse to say that it is satisfied of the fact of the resuscitation? What would any honest man think of the members of that jury, should they swear that this man had not been resuscitated by the interference of that individual who thus proves his commission? If that jury could, upon the testimony of those witnesses,

find the first fact, why shall they not upon the same testimony find the second?

But we may be asked how we know that this man was dead? Probably it was only a mistake. He could not have been totally bereft of life. Ask the jury, who, upon the certainty of the fact of death, consigned their fellow citizen to infamy and to the gallows. Shall we admit the certainty for the purposes of human justice, and quibble with our convictions to exclude the testimony of heaven? This, indeed, would be a miserable sophistry. Would any court upon such a plea, so unsupported, issue a respite from execution? An isolated *perhaps* with nothing to rest upon, set up against positive testimony, resting upon the uncontradicted evidence derived from the senses, from experience, and from analogy. A speculative possibility against a substantive fact by which the very possibility is destroyed!

Where is the cause of doubt? Where the difference between the two cases? In both suppositions the essential facts are the same,—life, death,—identity; the difference consists in the accidental circumstance of the priority of one to the other. The one is the ordinary transition from life to death, an occurrence which is to us most mysterious and inexplicable, but with the existence of which we are long familiar; the other a transition from death to life, not more mysterious but which rarely occurs, and when it does occur, is most closely examined, viewed with jealous scrutiny, and which excites deep interest, and to admit the truth of which there is no predisposition in the mind. The facts are precisely the same in the case of the murder and of the miracle, the accident of the priority of each alternately to the other, constitutes the whole difference. And surely if witnesses can tell me that a man who has never died shews all the symptoms of life, the same witnesses can tell me the same fact, though that man had passed from death to life. The symptoms of life are always the same, and the testimony which will establish the fact of life at one time, by

proving the existence of those symptoms, will be at any time sufficient for the same purpose. The same is to be said of the symptoms of death, and of the testimony which will establish the fact by proving their existence. It may be objected that no adequate cause is assigned for this extraordinary occurrence. The answer is two fold. To be convinced of the truth of a fact, it is not necessary that I should know the cause of its existence, it suffices for me to know the existence of the fact itself, and its existence will not be the less certain though I should never be able to discover the cause. How many facts do we every day witness, whose causes are still to us inaccessible and undiscovered. Next; an adequate cause is here distinctly pointed out and referred to. He who first breathed into the nostrils of man, whom he fashioned from the dust, a living soul, is now equally powerful to call back the departed spirit to its mouldering tenement of clay.

In the Mosaic,—in the Christian dispensation, what multitudes of miraculous facts attest the presence of the Deity? the revelations of heaven? During what a length of time were not those facts open to every species of examination? How favourable were the circumstances for the detection of imposition, for the exposure of fanaticism, for the ridicule of folly, if the impostor, the fanatic, or the fool had claimed to be the messenger of heaven? Thus we believe that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ instructed man in the doctrines of truth, had authority to prescribe laws of morality, and founded institutions to which we are religiously bound unalterably to adhere. If the miraculous facts, which establish this conclusion, are not in full evidence, I, for one, must profess that I must blot from my mind all that I have been ever led to believe was a fact of history.

A peculiarity of our religion is, that we may at any moment risk its truth or falsehood upon the truth or falsehood of the statement of any one or the whole of a vast variety of facts. We know nothing of speculation, we know nothing of opinion. Opinions form no part of

our religion. It is all a statement of facts, and the truth of those facts can at any moment be brought to the test. With this we stand or fall. Allow me to adduce one fact as an instance and an illustration.

The founder of our church, the Saviour of the world, foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and that not a stone should be left upon another of the mighty mass of the splendid temple. One of our prophets foretold that upon the establishment of the new law which we profess, the sacrifice should cease, and never be restored in that temple. The sacrifice did cease—the city was sacked,—the temple was destroyed:—the Christians proclaimed that the temple would never be rebuilt, the sacrifice would never be restored. The Roman emperor Julian, having apostatized from the faith, was determined to humble the church from which he had deserted, and, by establishing one fact to defeat their prophecy, to prove the delusion of the Nazareans or Galileans, as he termed the Christians. With the wealth of the Roman empire, the power of his sceptre, the influence of his place, and the devotion of the most zealous people under heaven, he made the attempt. The whole Jewish people animated with love of country and of religion, cheered by their neighbours, urged on by their emperor, flattered by his court, undertook the work, they rooted up the old foundations of the temple, until indeed there was not left a stone upon a stone; they prepared to rebuild, but history testifies their disappointment. Cyril of Jerusalem, a bishop of our church, and Ammianus Marcellinus the emperor's historian, a Christian and a pagan, together with a cloud of other witnesses, inform us of their discomfiture. Centuries have elapsed. The prophecy and the attempt are both on record. To-day we say, as our predecessors said then, "Build that temple, offer one sacrifice according to the Mosaic rites within its walls, and we acknowledge our delusion." But we cannot, for any speculative opinions of philosophers, abandon the evidence of miracles, of prophecy, and of history united.

My brethren, I come now to a new part of my subject. We have seen that our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ made a revelation to the human race: our next and very natural inquiry must be, to discover how we shall ascertain what that revelation is. This is the place where we arrive at the essential distinction between the Roman Catholic Church and every other: it is, indeed, upon this question the whole difference turns; and to this it must be always brought back. The doctrine, which, as a prelate of that church, and from my own conscientious conviction, I preach, differs very widely indeed from what is generally professed and acted upon by the great majority of our citizens, and by a vast portion of the respectable and enlightened assemblage by which I am surrounded. I shall state our doctrine fully upon this head; but I do not feel that it would be correct, or delicate on my part, to enter upon the field of polemics for its vindication. Still it will be permitted that I shall give an outline, imperfect and defective it must be, for the cause which I have assigned, of the reasons for that Faith which is in us.

And here let me assure you, that if, in the course of my observations, any expression should escape from me that may appear calculated to wound the feelings of those from whom I differ, that it is not my intention to assail, to insult, or to give pain; and that I may be pardoned for what will be in truth an inconsiderate expression, not intended to offend. Neither my own feelings, nor my judgment, nor my faith, would dictate to me any thing calculated to embitter the feelings of those who differ from me—merely for that difference. My kindest friends; my most intimate acquaintance; those whom I do, and ought to esteem and respect, are at variance with my creed; yet it does not and shall not destroy our affections. In me it would be ingratitude; for I must avow, and I do it most willingly, that in my journeys through our states I have been frequently humbled and abashed at the kindness with which I have been treated. I came amongst you a stranger, and I went through your land with many and most serious, and un-

fortunate mistakes, for which you were not blameable, operating to my disadvantage. If a Roman Catholic Bishop was in truth, what he is even now generally supposed to be, in various parts of this Union, he should not be permitted to reside amongst you; yet was I received into your houses, enrolled in your families, and profited by your kindness—I have frequently put the question to myself, whether if I had similar impressions regarding you I could have acted with the like kindness; and I must own, I frequently doubted that I would. It is true, you laboured under serious mistakes as to what was my religion, and what were my duties and my obligations. But you were not yourselves the cause of those mistakes; nor had you within your reach the means of correcting them. I feel grateful to my friends who have afforded me this opportunity of perhaps aiding to do away those impressions; for our affections will be more strong as those mistakes will be corrected; and it must gratify those, who, loving the country, behold us spread through it, to be assured, that we are not those vile beings that have been painted to their imaginations, and which ought not to be allowed existence in any civilized community.

Upon our principles, my brethren, we must not speculate; we must always keep our eye steadily upon facts. The wisest man might be misled in speculation; might make great mistakes in forming opinions; but if he has evidence of a fact, he has ground upon which he can rest with certainty; and the inevitable consequence of that fact produces certainty also: let us then look for facts, instead of hazarding conjectures or maintaining opinions.

It is a fact, that our blessed Redeemer did not write his communications: it is equally certain, that he neither gave a command, nor a commission, to have them written. It is a fact, that his religion was fully and extensively established before any part of the scriptures of our new law was committed to writing. We, therefore, believe it to be evident that our religion was not established by the dissemination of writings.

We have abundant testimony to shew that our blessed Redeemer, besides having publicly taught the people, selected a few persons whom he more fully instructed, and duly authorized to teach also. They were his companions during life, and after his death they were the promulgators of his doctrine. Their commission from him was not to become philosophers, discussing what was probably the nature of God and the obligation of man, and examining what means they would esteem to be most likely to lead mankind to eternal happiness; but they were constituted witnesses to others, to testify what the Saviour revealed to them, and to speak of positive facts with undoubting certainty,—and to state what he actually told, what he precisely commanded, what he positively instituted, and for what purpose, and what were to be the consequences,—all this was matter of fact testified by witnesses, not discovered by disquisitions of philosophy. They were not to add, they were not to diminish, they were not to change; the perfection of the revelation consisted in preserving the account purely unchanged. We find the fact of the addition of others to the commission of teachers, the very nature of the case exhibited the necessity of such addition, because the original commissioners would not suffice for the multitude to be taught. Natural reason pointed out the course which testimony shews us was followed. They who were originally constituted by the Redeemer as the teaching tribunal, selected those whom they found best instructed, and being satisfied of their integrity, by the testimony of those who had long known them, they were themselves judges of their full acquaintance with the truths which were to be taught, and of their ability; they ordained them as fellow witnesses, extended to them the power of the commission, and thus in every city were chosen faithful men, who might be fit to teach others that form of sound words which had been committed to themselves before many witnesses; those people who heard their first teachers were also capable of observing if any deviation had been made by their

successors. Those first teachers and their associates were scattered abroad widely through the world, but in all places they taught the same things, for truth could not be contradictory. Some persons sought after novelties, and separated from the great body which remained united in government and in doctrine, though widely scattered through the world. Those isolated and independent divisions followed each some theory of its own, having some peculiarity by which each was distinguished from the other, each judging and deciding for itself, and each claiming to have preserved the true doctrine. This state of things existed almost at the very origin of the Christian Church, and has since continued more or less extensively. It was not until the eighth year after the ascension of our Lord, or the year 41 of our era, that the first part of the New Testament was written by St. Matthew, who was one of the earliest companions of the Saviour and an apostle. Many of the Christians had committed to writing several facts and discourses which they had learned. Many of their accounts contained much that has never reached us. Some years afterwards, St. Mark, who was not an apostle, but who was a companion of St. Peter, the president of the Apostolic body, first in honor and first in jurisdiction, abridged much of what St. Matthew had written, and added much of his own, which he had probably learned from St. Peter; those books had a limited circulation amongst the Christians in some places, but highly as they were valued, they were not looked upon as the exclusive evidence of the doctrines of the Redeemer, and the very fact, which is of course incontestible, that a vast quantity of what we all now receive as his doctrine is not contained in them but was subsequently written, renders it impossible for any of us to assume this principle. In the year 53 of our era, St. Luke, who was a physician in Antioch, and who had been occasionally a companion of St. Paul, and had conversed with many of the other disciples and apostles, began to write his Gospel from the accounts collected through others, and

chiefly to counteract the circulation of many erroneous accounts which were written; he probably had not seen either of the two Gospels written by Matthew or Mark. About ten years after this, he wrote the Acts of the Apostles as a continuation of his history, and in it he principally confines himself to the account of the labours of St. Paul, as he was his companion and had the opportunity of observing his proceedings. Upwards of thirty years more elapsed before St. John wrote his Gospel at the request of the churches of Asia Minor, in order to testify against the errors of several persons who then troubled those churches with their speculations and imaginations. He had previously written his book of Revelations, being an obscure prophecy of some future events blended with history and vision. He had written some Epistles to churches and to individuals on particular occasions. St. Paul, in the discharge of his duties, had been sometimes consulted upon particular questions, by churches which he had founded or visited; and some of his Epistles are extant, in which he answers their difficulties, gives them instruction suitable to their circumstances, and makes several regulations. He also wrote on other occasions to churches and to individuals, as did three or four of the other Apostles; some of those letters remain; we are informed, and think it not unlikely, that many more have been lost.

Thus, during the first century, it is a fact, that no such book as we now receive as the New Testament, was used or adopted in the church as the mode of each individual or each church ascertaining what was the doctrine of Christ. The several portions of which it is composed had been written, and were used, but they were not collected together, and very probably no individual had a copy of each. But those were not the only books of the same description which circulated, for there were very many others purporting to be gospels and epistles; and it would indeed be very difficult for any individual who desired to know the doctrine of

the Redeemer, to discover it from books in such a state of things.

Another fact is also obvious—that in this century the apostles, and most of those whom they had associated with them in their commission, died. During their lives, they were the teachers of the doctrine; they testified what Christ had taught, and it was by reference to their tribunal it was ascertained. But a question here naturally presents itself to us. Should a difference of testimony be found amongst those teachers, it is very evident that one of them must have, to say the least, made a mistake: how was an honest inquirer after truth to know what God has revealed? It is plain, we say, that truth and error must exist in such a case, however innocent the erring party might be. And unless there was a very plain and simple mode of detecting that error, he who gave the revelation would not have provided for its preservation. And as this difference not only might exist, but did actually occur at a very early period within this same century, the evidence of truth would have been lost in the difference of testimony, and revelation would have been made useless, almost as soon as it had been given. We say, that the common rule of evidence from testimony would have been sufficient, when properly applied, to have detected the error. That rule is: examine the witnesses fully as to the fact, and if the vast majority, under proper circumstances, will agree in their testimony, it is the evidence of truth. Our history exhibits to us, in the lifetime of the apostles, the facts of the difference, the examination and the decision by this rule; and also the further fact, that they who would not abide by the decision, were no longer considered as holding the doctrine which had been revealed, but as making new opinions, and substituting what they thought ought to be, instead of preserving what had always been. We then find those who continued to testify the doctrine of the apostles holding together with them, recognized as joined in their commission, and authorized also to extend and to perpetuate the same. Thus, although the apostles and

their associates died within this century, still that tribunal of which they were the first members survived, and at the end of this period was far more numerous and much more widely extended through the world; and it was to this tribunal recourse was had to ascertain what was the doctrine of our blessed Redeemer. Originally this tribunal consisted of Peter and his associates, the other apostles—now it consisted of the successor of Peter and the successors of the other apostles, and of their associates through the world.

No king could say that he would regulate the doctrines for his people: no nation had authority to modify those doctrines for themselves. The perfection of religion consists in preserving the doctrines such as they have been given by God in revelation. The difference of temporal government cannot alter what he has said. Thus, they formed but one church through many nations—one tribunal to testify in every place the same doctrine—all the individuals who taught, were witnesses for or against each other:—the whole body, with the successor of Peter at its head, watchful to see that each taught that which was originally delivered.

In the second century the same system continues; similar facts present themselves to our view; the mode of ascertaining what Christ had taught was, by the declarations of this permanent body, thus continued. The books of the New Testament were, perhaps, better known and more generally read, but their circulation was comparatively limited, their authority not sufficiently developed, and they were by no means considered as the sole source from which individuals, or even congregations, could draw a full knowledge of the revelations of the Saviour. It was not until after the lapse of three centuries that the members of the living tribunal, which had always been the witnesses of doctrine, selected the books which form the New Testament from the various other works of a similar description, which had been very freely disseminated; and we have full evidence of this plain fact, that this tribunal had been the authoritative witness of the revealed

truths from the beginning, and that it was only after a long lapse of time that body separated what we have, as the scriptures of the new law from several spurious works of little or no value, some of them false and pernicious. And our belief is, that the mode of ascertaining the doctrine of truth originally was, and continued to be, by the testimony of that tribunal, rather than by the testimony of those books.

What would be the authority of those books, without the authority of that tribunal? Bring any written document into any court of justice, lay it on the table; what will it prove? Will you not first produce evidence to show what it is? You must prove by the testimony of some competent witness, the nature and authenticity of a written document, before that written document can be used. Without having been thus established, it lies useless before the court; it might be what it purports to be, but it is plain that a written or printed book might not be what it assumes in its title; a document flung upon the table of a court lies there without any use, until it is made useful by testimony besides itself. The record of a court must be proved by the officer of that court; fictions and forgeries are as easily printed or produced as are the genuine statements of truth; and it does not derogate from the value of a genuine document to say that it needs first to be proved, for no document can prove itself.

Our doctrine then is, that in all cases of difference as to faith, between the commissioned teachers of the church, or in any such differences between others, the mode originally used will procure for us evidence of truth. The question never can be respecting opinion, it must always be concerning fact: that fact is what God did reveal. The original witnesses spread through the world testified this fact to their associates and to their successors; this testimony was thus continued. In the second or third century the bishop in Greece could testify what had been transmitted to him; the Parthian bishop gave his testimony; the Egyptian added his; the Italian told what he had been taught; their agreement

could not have been the effect of accident: the prejudices, the national habits, and the thousand accidental differences of each, made them sufficiently watchful of each other: their joint and concurrent testimony must have been full proof of the sameness of the testimony of their predecessors, until all met in the apostles who heard it from Jesus Christ. We say, that when the great majority of the bishops united with their head the bishop of Rome, who succeeds to Peter, thus concur in their testimony it is evidence of truth: we will infallibly come to a certain knowledge of what God has revealed. This is our doctrine of the infallibility of the church: and thus we believe that we will ascertain what Christ taught, by the testimony of the majority of the bishops united to their head, whether assembled or dispersed through their sees, all over the world.

Others may be of opinion, that this is an irrational—that this is an incorrect, that this is an insufficient mode. We do not view it in that light: and I may be permitted to say for myself, perhaps it might be deemed prejudice; perhaps a weakness of intellect, or a slavery of mind; to me it appears a much better mode of attaining its great object than to take up the scriptures and decide solely for myself; better than to depend upon the authority of any individual, however learned or pious, or inspired with heavenly knowledge he might be deemed. I am not infallible; but in virtue of my place I give my testimony; I may err, but the majority of my brethren will correct that error. A few others may err; still the testimony of the majority prevails—thus individuals may separate from us, but our unity and our testimony remains. We do not profess to believe our Pope infallible. We believe, that by virtue of the divine appointment, he presides amongst us, but we are fellow witnesses with him.

But this power of decision is by its own nature extremely limited. We are witnesses to our brethren, not despots over men's minds. Our testimony must be confined to what has been revealed; we cannot add, we cannot diminish. Such is the duty of a witness,

such is ours. All the popes and bishops, all the councils which have ever existed, or which may exist, have not, and cannot have the power of commanding the humblest individual to believe one particle more on the subject of revelation, than what they testify God to have taught. When they exhibit what has been taught by heaven, man is bound to believe; let them say, "besides this which God has revealed, we are of opinion that you would do well to believe this, which he has not taught, but which we think a very good doctrine." He is free to act as he may think proper, his belief would not be faith, it would be receiving the opinions of men, not the teaching of heaven; this mode of teaching is never used in our church. The decisions of our councils, are the exhibition of the original revelation, not the expressions of adopted opinions: so too, the whole body of our church cannot omit to teach any revealed truth; she must teach all; she must be a faithful witness; neither adding, omitting or changing.

In our mode of examining, although we believe the founder of our church made a promise of his divine guidance to protect our body from erring, we take all the natural means which will aid in the discovery of the original fact. We not only have known the testimony of those from whom we learned, and that of those with whom we associate; but we have the records of our churches, we have the documents of antiquity; we have the writings of our ancient and venerable and eminent bishops and doctors, coming from every age and from every nation. We have the decisions of former councils, we have the monuments which have been erected, the usages which have prevailed, the customs which continue, and when we take up the sacred volume of the scriptures, we collate its passages with the results which we gather from those sources. The prelates of our several nations make this examination in every quarter of the globe, each testifies what he has found in conjunction with those of his vicinity who could aid him in his research, and

thus we obtain testimony of the world respecting facts in which the world is deeply interested. Can it be slavery in me to bow to the decision of this tribunal? Frequently questions which have been long since decided in this manner are revived. Our answer in those cases is very short. "This has been already determined." We are told this is limiting the operations and chaining down the freedom of the human mind. Perhaps it is. But if the proper use of the faculties be the discovery of truth, and that truth has been already discovered, what more is necessary? When investigations have been made, and results arrived at, why investigate still? You go into court to defend your property, you have your titles fully investigated, judgment is given in your favor, it is put upon record; a new litigant calls you to go over the same ground, will not the record of the judgment against his father protect you? Or must you, because he chooses to trouble you, burn that record, and join issue again? We quote the decisions of former times as proofs that investigation has been already made, and that a decision has long since been had. And what has once been found to have been revealed by God, cannot by any lapse of time cease to be revelation: if the fact shall have been once fully proved, that proof must be good always—if a record thereof be made, that record is always evidence.

A political difficulty has been sometimes raised here. If this infallible tribunal which you profess yourselves bound to obey, should command you to overturn our government, and tell you that it is the will of God to have it new modelled, will you not be bound to obey it? And how then can we consider those men to be good citizens, who profess to owe obedience to a foreign authority, to an authority not recognized in our constitution; to an authority which has excommunicated and deposed sovereigns, and which has absolved subjects and citizens from their bond of allegiance?

Our answer to this is extremely simple and very plain, it is, that we would not be bound to obey it; that

we recognize no such authority. I would not allow to the pope or to any bishop of our church, outside this Union, the smallest interference with the humblest vote at our most insignificant balloting box. He has no right to such interference. You must from the view which I have taken, see the plain distinction between spiritual authority, and a right to interfere in the regulation of human government or civil concerns. You have in your constitution wisely kept them distinct and separate. It will be wisdom and prudence and safety to continue the separation. Your constitution says that Congress shall have no power to restrict the free exercise of religion. Suppose your dignified body to-morrow attempted to restrict me in the exercise of that right; though the law, as it would be called, should pass your two houses and obtain the signature of the president, I would not obey it, because it would be no law, it would be an usurpation: for you cannot make a law in violation of your constitution; you have no power in such a case. So, if that tribunal which is established by the Creator to testify to me what he has revealed, and to make the necessary regulations of discipline for the government of the church, shall presume to go beyond that boundary which circumscribes its power, its acts are invalid, my rights are not to be destroyed by its usurpation, and there is no principle of my creed which prevents my using my natural right of proper resistance to any tyrannical usurpation. You have no power to interfere with my religious rights, the tribunal of the church has no power to interfere with my civil rights. It is a duty which every good man ought to discharge for his own, and for the public benefit, to resist any encroachment upon either. We do not believe that God gave to the church any power to interfere with our civil rights, or our civil concerns. Christ our Lord refused to interfere in the division of the inheritance between two brothers, one of whom requested that interference. The civil tribunals of Judea were vested with sufficient authority for that purpose, and he did not transfer it

to his apostles. It must hence be apparent that any idea of the Roman Catholics of those republics being in any way under the influence of any foreign ecclesiastical power, or indeed of any church authority in the exercise of their civil rights, is a serious mistake. There is no class of our fellow citizens more free to think, and to act for themselves on the subject of our rights than we are, and I believe there is not any portion of the American family more jealous of foreign influence, or more ready to resist it. We have brethren of our church in every part of the globe, under every form of government, this is a subject upon which each of us is free to act as he thinks proper. We know of no tribunal in our church which can interfere in our proceedings as citizens. Our ecclesiastical authority existed before our constitution, is not affected by it, there is not in the world a constitution which it does not precede, with which it could not co-exist, it has seen nations perish, dynasties decay, empires prostrate; it has co-existed with all, it has survived them all, it is not dependent upon any governments; they may change, and it will still continue.

It is again urged that at least our church is aristocratic if not despotic in its principles, and is not calculated for a republic, that its spirit is opposed to that of republicanism. This objection cannot be seriously urged by any person who has studied history, nor by any person who is acquainted with our tenets. Look over the history of the world since the establishment of Christianity, and where have there been republics? Have the objectors read the history of Italy? A soil fertile in republics, and most devoted to our religion! What was the religion of William Tell? He was a Roman Catholic. Look not only to the Swiss republics, but take San-Marino, this little state, during centuries the most splendid specimen of the purest democracy, and this democracy protected by our Popes during those centuries. Men who make the assertions to which I have alluded cannot have read history! Amongst ourselves, what is the religion of the vener-

able Charles Carroll of Carrollton? Men who make these assertions cannot have read our Declaration of Independence. What was the religion of the good, the estimable, the beloved Doctor Carroll, our first Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, the founder of our hierarchy, the friend of Washington, the associate of Franklin? Have those men been degraded in our church because they aided in your struggle for the assertion of your rights, for the establishment of our glorious and our happy republics? No; they are the jewels which we prize, the ornaments of our church, the patriots of our country. They and others, whom we count as our members and esteem for their virtues, have been the intimate and faithful associates of many of our best patriots who have passed from our transitory scene, and of some who yet view in consolation our prosperity. What is the religion of Simon Bolivar? What the religion of the whole population of our republican sisters upon the Southern Continent? We are always assailed by speculation. We always answer by facts. Have we been found traitors in your councils, unfaithful to your trust, cowards in your fields, or in correspondence with your enemies? Yet we have been consulted for our prudence, confided in for our fidelity, enriched your soil with our blood, filled your decks with our energy, and though some of us might have wept at leaving the land of our ancestors because of the injustice of its rulers, we told our brothers who assailed you in the day of battle that we knew them not, and we adhered to those who gave to us a place of refuge and impartial protection. Shall we then be told that our religion is not the religion calculated for republics, though it will be found that the vast majority of republican states and of republican patriots have been and even now are Roman Catholic? It is true, ours is also the religion of a large portion of empires, and of kingdoms, and of principalities. The fact is so for an obvious reason, because it is the religion of the great bulk of the civilized world. Our tenets do not proscribe any form of government which

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the people may properly and regularly establish. No revelation upon which my eye has fallen, or which ever reached my ear, has taught me that the Almighty God commanded us to be governed by kings, or by emperors, or by princes, or to associate in republics. Upon this God has left us free to make our own selection. The decision upon the question of expediency as to the form of government for temporal or civil concerns, is one to be settled by society and not by the church. We therefore bind no nation or people to any special form, the form which they may adopt lies not with us but with themselves. What suits the genius and circumstances of one people might be totally unfit for another; hence no special form of human government for civil concerns has been generally established by divine authority: but the God of order who commands men to dwell together in peace, has armed the government which has been properly established by the principles of society with power for the discharge of the functions which are given by society to its administration; whilst it continues within its due bounds to discharge properly its constitutional obligations it is the duty of each good member of society to concur in its support, and he who would resist its proper authority would in this case resist the ordinance of the God of peace and of order, and, as the apostle says, would purchase damnation for himself. This principle applies alike to all forms of government properly established, and properly administered, to republics and to kingdoms alike. It is then a mistake to imagine that our church has more congeniality to one species of civil government than to another; it has been fitted by its author, who saw the fluctuating state of civil rule, to exist independently of any, and to be suited to either. Its own peculiar forms for its internal regulation, may and do continue to be adhered to under every form of temporal rule.

But is it not a tenet of our church that we must persecute all those who differ from us? Has not our religion been propagated by the firebrand and by the

sword? Is not the Inquisition one of its component parts? Are not our boasted South American republics persecutors still? And in the code of our infallible church have we not canons of persecution which we are conscientiously bound to obey and to enforce? Did not the great Lateran Council in 1215, command all princes to exterminate all heretics? If then we are not persecutors in fact it is because we want the power, for it is plain that we do not want the disposition

I would humbly submit, that not one of these questions could be truly answered in the affirmative. The spirit of religion is that of peace and of mercy; not that of persecution: yet men of every creed have persecuted their brethren under the pretext of religion. The great founder of our church, at a very early period, checked this spirit in his apostles; when some cities would not receive his doctrine, they asked, why he did not call down fire from heaven to destroy them; but his calm and dignified rebuke was, that they knew not by what spirit they were led: it was the spirit of human passion assuming the garb of heavenly zeal. I know of no power given by God to any man, or to any body of men, in the christian dispensation, to inflict any penalty of a temporal description, upon their fellow men for mere religious error. If such error shall cause the violation of peace, or shall interfere with the well being of society, temporal governments, being established to prevent such disorders, have their own inherent right, but not a religious commission, to interfere merely for that prevention. Each individual is responsible to God for his conduct in this regard; to him and to him only we stand or fall. He commissioned the church to teach his doctrine, but he did not commission her to persecute those who would not receive it. He who beholds the evidence of truth and will not follow it, is inexcusable—he who will not use his best exertions to obtain that evidence, is inexcusable: he who having used his best exertions for that purpose, and having with the best intentions made a mistake in coming to his conclusion, is not a criminal because of that mistake. God

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alone, the searcher of our hearts, can clearly see the full accountability of each individual upon this head; because each person must be accountable according to his opportunities. I feel that many and serious mistakes are made by my friends in this country. I know who are mistaken, but far be it from me to say that all who err are criminal. I have frequently asked myself, whether if I had had only the same opportunities of knowing the doctrine of my church, and its evidences, that many of them have had, I would be what I now am. Indeed, it would be very extraordinary if I was. They labour under those mistakes, not through their own fault in several instances; and if the Roman Catholic Church was, in her doctrines and her practices, what they have been taught she is, I would not be a Roman Catholic. They imagine her to be what she is not, and when they oppose what they believe her to be, it is not to her their opposition is really given. To God, and to him alone belongs, ultimately to discriminate between those who are criminal and those who are innocent in their error; and I look in vain through every record, in vain I listen to every testimony of my doctrine to discover any command to persecute, any power to inflict fine, or disqualification, or bodily chastisement upon those who are in mere religious error. It is no doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church; I do not know that it is the doctrine of any church calling itself Christian; but, unfortunately, I know it has been practised by some Roman Catholics, and it has been practised in every church which accused her of having had recourse thereto. I would then say it was taught by no church; it has been practised in all. One great temptation to its exercise is, the union of any church with the state: and religion has more frequently been but a pretext with statesmen, for a political purpose, than the cause of persecution for zeal on its own behalf.

Christ gave to his apostles no commission to use the sword or the brand, and they went forth in the simplicity of their testimony, and the evidence of their miracles, and the power of their commission, to convert the

world. They gave freely their own blood to be shed for the sake of religion, but they shed not the blood of their opponents. Their associates and their successors followed their example, and were successful by that imitation. And the historian who represents the chastisements of infidel barbarians, by christian princes, for the protection of their own people, and the security of their own property, misleads the reader whom he would fain persuade, that it was done for the purposes of religion at the instigation of those who laid down their own lives in the conversion of those barbarians. It is true, indeed, that we cannot call error truth, nor style truth error; it is true that we say there must continue to be an essential distinction between them; it is true that we cannot belie our consciences, nor bear false witness to our neighbours, by telling them that we believe they adhere to the doctrines of Christ, when they contradict what we receive as those doctrines: we cannot believe two contradictory propositions to be at the same time true. But such a declaration on our part does not involve as its consequence that we believe they ought to be persecuted. The Inquisition is a civil tribunal of some states, not a portion of our religion.

We now come to examine what are called the persecuting laws of our church. In the year 1215, at the Council of Lateran, certain heretics were condemned by the first canon; and amongst other things this canon recites as Catholic faith, in opposition to the errors of those whom it condemned, that there was but one God the creator of all things, of spirits as well as of bodies; the author of the Old Testament and of the Mosaic dispensation, equally as of the New Testament and of the Christian dispensation: that he created not only the good angels, but also the devil and the bad angels, originally coming good from his hand, and becoming wicked by their own malice, &c. In its third canon it excommunicates those heretics, and declares them to be separated from the body of the church. Then follows a direction, that the heretics so condemned, are to be given up to the secular powers, or to their

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bailiffs, to be duly punished. This direction continues to require of all bishops and others having authority, to make due search within their several districts for those heretics, and if they will not be induced to retract their errors, desires that they should be delivered over to be punished. There is an injunction then to all temporal lords to cleanse their dominions by exterminating those heretics: and if they will not, within a year from having been so admonished by the church, cleanse their lands of *this heretical filth*, they shall be deprived if they have superior lords, and if they be superior lords and be negligent, it shall be the duty of the metropolitan and his provincial bishops to excommunicate them, and if any one of those lords paramount so excommunicated for this negligence shall continue during twelve months under the excommunication, the metropolitan shall certify the same to the pope, who, finding admonition useless, shall depose this prince, and absolve his subjects from their oaths of fealty, and deliver the territory over to Catholics, who having exterminated the heretics shall remain in peaceable possession.

This is the most formidable evidence adduced against the position which I have laid down, that it is not a doctrine of our church, that we are bound to persecute those who differ from us in belief. I trust that I shall not occupy very much of your time in showing, that this enactment does not in any way weaken that assertion. I shall do so, by satisfying you that this is a special law for a particular case; and also by convincing you that it is not a canon of the church respecting any of those points in which we admit her infallibility; nor is it a canon of the church.

The doctrines condemned in this first canon originated in Syria, touched lightly at the islands of the Archipelago, settled down in Bulgaria, and spread into the south of Europe, but were principally received in the vicinity of Albi, in France. The persons condemned held the Manichean principle of there being two creators of the universe; one a good being, the author

of the New Testament, the creator of good angels, and generally of spiritual essence; the other an evil being, the creator of bodies, the author of the Mosaic dispensation, and generally of the Old Testament. They stated that marriage was unlawful, and that co-operation with the principle of evil was criminal. The consequences to society were of the very worst description, immoral, dismal, and desolating. The church examined the doctrine, condemned it as heretical, and cut off those who held or abetted it, from her communion. Here, according to the principles which I have maintained before you, her power ended. Beyond this we claim no authority; the church, by divine right, we say, infallibly testifies what doctrines Christ has revealed, and by the same right, in the same manner, decides that what contradicts this revelation is erroneous; but she has no divine authority to make a law which shall strip of their property, or consign to the executioner, those whom she convicts of error. The doctrine of our obligation to submit does not extend to force us to submit to an usurpation; and if the church made a law upon a subject beyond her commission for legislation it would be invalid; there would be no proper claim for our obedience: usurpation does not create a right. The council could by right make the doctrinal decision; but it had no right to make the temporal enactment; and where there exists no right to legislate on one side, there is no obligation of obedience on the other. If this was then a canon of the church, it was not one in making which she was acting within her constitutional jurisdiction, it was an usurpation of temporal government, and the doctrine of infallibility does not bear upon it.

Every document respecting this council, the entire of the evidence respecting it, as well as the very mode of framing the enactments prove that it was a special law regarding a particular case. The only persons whose errors were condemned at that council were those whom I have described. The general principle of legal exposition restraining the application of penal

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enactments must here have full weight, and will restrain the application of the penalty to the only criminals brought within its view. But the evidence is still more confirmed, by the special words of definite meaning, *this*, and *filth*, which were specially descriptive of only those persons; the first by its very nature, the second by the nature of their crime; and the continued exposition of the enactment restrained its application to the special case, though frequently attempts had been made by individuals to extend its application, not in virtue of the statute, but in virtue of analogy. It would then be improperly forcing its construction to say that its operation was to be general, as it evidently was made only for a particular case.

In viewing the preamble to this council, as well as from our knowledge of history, we discover that this was not merely a council of the church, but it was also a congress of the civilized world. The state of the times rendered such assemblages not only usual but necessary: and each legislative body did its own business by its own authority; and very generally the subjects which were decided upon by one body in one point of view, came under the consideration of the other assembly in a different point of view, and their separate decisions were engrossed upon a joint record. Sometimes they were preserved distinct and separate, but copyists, for their own convenience, brought together all the articles regarding the same subject, from what source soever they were obtained. Such was precisely the case in the instance before us. There were present on this occasion, by themselves or by their legates, the king of Sicily, emperor elect of the Romans, the emperor of the east, the king of France, the king of England, the king of Arragon, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Cyprus, several other kings, and lords paramount, sovereign states, and princes. Several of the bishops were princes or barons. In the ecclesiastical council, the third canon terminated exactly in one sentence, which was that of the excommunication or separation from the church, of

those whom the first canon had condemned, whatever name or names they might assume; because they had in several places several appellations, and were continually dividing off and changing names as they separated. The duty and the jurisdiction of the council came to this; and the ancient records give no more as the portion of its enactments. But the congress of the temporal powers then made the subsequent part as their enactment: and thus this penal and civil regulation was not an act of the council, but an act of the congress; and it is not a canon concerning the doctrine of the church, nor indeed is it by any means a canon, though the copyists have added it to the canon as regarding the very same subject; and as confessedly the excommunication in the third canon regarded only the special case of those particular heretics, the addition of the penal enactment to this particular canon is confirmatory evidence that those who added it knew that the penalty in the one case was only co-extensive with the excommunication in the other.

Having thus seen that this canon of the Council of Lateran was not a doctrinal decision of our church establishing the doctrine of persecution, and commanding to persecute, but that it was a civil enactment by the temporal power against persons whom they looked upon as criminals, it is more the province of the politician or of the jurist than of the divine to decide upon its propriety, I may, however, be permitted to say that in my opinion the existence of civilized society required its enactment, though no good man can approve of several abuses which were committed under the pretext of its execution, nor can any rational man pretend that because of the existence of a special law for a particular purpose every case which may be thought analogous to that for which provision was made is to be illegally subjected to those provisions.

We are now arrived at the place where we may easily find the origin and the extent of the papal power of deposing sovereigns, and of absolving subjects from their oaths of allegiance. To judge properly of facts,

we must know their special circumstances, not their mere outline. The circumstances of Christendom were then widely different from those in which we now are placed. Europe was then under the feudal system. I have seldom found a writer, not a catholic, who, in treating of that age and that system, has been accurate, and who has not done us very serious injustice. But a friend of mine, who is a respectable member of your honorable body, has led me to read Hallam's account of it, and I must say that I have seldom met with so much candour, and, what I call, so much truth. From reading his statement of that system it will be plainly seen that there existed amongst the Christian potentates a sort of federation, in which they bound themselves by certain regulations, and to the observance of those they were held not merely by their oaths but by various penalties, sometimes they consented the penalty should be the loss of their station. It was of course necessary to ascertain that the fact existed before its consequences should be declared to follow; it was also necessary to establish some tribunal to examine and to decide as to the existence of the fact itself, and to proclaim that existence. Amongst independent sovereigns there was no superior, and it was natural to fear that mutual jealousy would create great difficulty in selecting a chief; and that what originated in concession might afterwards be claimed as a right. They were however all members of one church, of which the Pope was the head, and, in this respect, their common father; and by universal consent it was regulated that he should examine, ascertain the fact, proclaim it, and declare its consequences. Thus he did in reality possess the power of deposing monarchs, and of absolving their subjects from oaths of fealty, but only those monarchs who were members of that federation, and in the cases legally provided for, and by their concession, not by divine right, and during the term of that federation and the existence of his commission. He governed the church by divine right, he deposed kings and absolved subjects from their allegiance by human con-

cession. I preach the doctrines of my church by divine right, but I preach from this spot not by that right but by the permission of others.

It is not then a doctrine of our church that the pope has been divinely commissioned either to depose kings or to interfere with republics, or to absolve the subjects of the former from their allegiance, or interfere with the civil concerns of the latter. When the persecuted English Catholics, under Elizabeth, found the pope making an unfounded claim to this right, and upon the shadow of that unfounded right making inroads upon their national independence by declaring who should or who should not be their temporal ruler, they well shewed how little they regarded his absolving them from their allegiance, for they volunteered their services to protect their liberties, which their Catholic ancestors had laboured to establish. And she well found that a Catholic might safely be entrusted with the admiralty of her fleet, and that her person was secure amongst her disgraced Catholic nobility and gentry, and their persecuted adherents; although the Court of Rome had issued its bull of absolution, and some divines were found who endeavoured to prove that what originated in voluntary concession of states and monarchs was derived from divine institution. If then Elizabeth, of whose character I would not wish in this place to express my opinion, was safe amidst those whom she persecuted for their faith, even when the head of their church absolved them from allegiance, and if at such a moment they flocked round her standard to repel Catholic invaders who came with consecrated banners, and that it is admitted on all hands that in so doing they violated no principle of doctrine or of discipline of their church, as we all avow; surely America need not fear for the fidelity of her Catholic citizens, whom she cherishes and whom she receives to her bosom with affection and shelters from the persecution of others. Neither will any person attempt to establish an analogy between our federation and that of feudalism, to argue that the pope can do amongst us

what he did amongst European potentates under circumstances widely different.

It has been frequently objected to us, that our church has been more extensively persecuting than any other. This is not the place to enter into a comparison of the atrocities; but I will assert, that when weighed against each other, our scale will be found light indeed. Did any person think proper to conjure up the victims from the grave, I would engage to produce evidence of the inflictions upon us in abundance, until the hairs of our hearers should stand on end, and humanity interpose to prevent the recital. But the crimes of individuals or of assemblies are not the doctrines of a church.

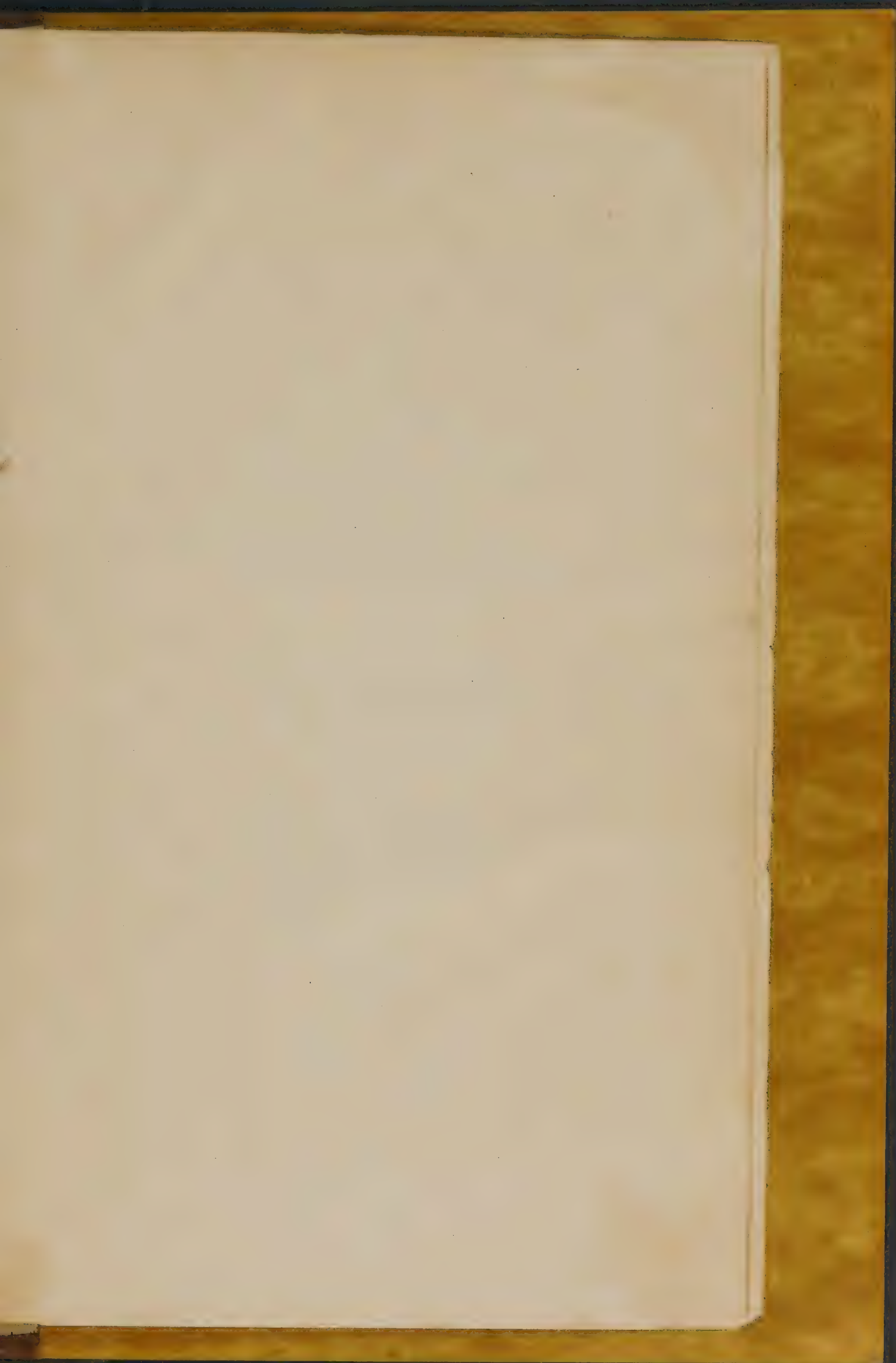
I had other subjects which I desired to treat of in your presence, but I feel I have trespassed too long upon your patience. Let us go back to our view of religion. We may now say that all the law and the prophets can be reduced to the two great commandments as our blessed Saviour gave them: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and thy whole mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first and the greatest. Love is affectionate attachment founded upon esteem. We seek to know the will of those whom we love that we may bring ours to be in conformity therewith. The will of God is, that we should seek to know what he teaches, because, indeed, he would not have taught without desiring that we should learn. Our Saviour himself tells his disciples, if they love him they will keep his word. The proof, then, of our love is not to be exhibited in our mere declaration, it is to be found in the manifestation of our assiduity to know what our Creator has taught, that it might be the rule of our practice—that we might believe his declarations, obey his injunctions and adhere to his institutions. As his knowledge surpasses ours, so his declarations may regard facts beyond our comprehension, and our faith be thus built upon the evidence of his word for things which we have not seen, and his promises exhibit to us the substance of

what we hope to enjoy, because he has pledged his veracity, not because our reason makes it manifest. It is our duty to love him so as to be zealous for discovering what he has taught, that we might pay to him the homage of our understanding, as well by its exertion as by its submission. Let me then exhort you to this love. Investigate for the purpose of obtaining the knowledge of truth, and then pay the homage of your will by determining to act in conformity with what you shall have discovered. Submit your affections to his law, bring your passions in subjection thereto. Of ourselves we are weak, in his grace we can become strong. His institutions have been established, that through them we might be strengthened in that grace. It is therefore our duty, as it is our interest, to have recourse to them. Reason, religion; wisdom which is the perfection of both, leads us to this conclusion: It necessarily, then, is incumbent on us to search for where those institutions are to be found.

The second commandment is like the first: It is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself for the sake of God. The apostle asks us, how can a man say that he loves God whom he hath not seen, and hate his neighbour whom he seeth? and that neighbour is made to the likeness of God. The Saviour commands us even to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who calumniate and persecute us. Nothing can excuse us from the discharge of this duty, the observance of this great commandment. No difference of country, or of religion, can form a pretext for non-compliance. Religion, that holy name has too often been abused for this end, that man might flatter himself with having the sanction of heaven for the indulgence of a bad passion. In these happy and free states we stand upon the equal ground of religious right, we may freely love and bear with each other; and exhibit to Europe a contrast to her jealousies in our affection. By inquiry we shall correct many mistakes, by which our feelings have been embittered: we shall be

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more bound together in amity, as we become more intimate; and may our harmony and union here below produce that peace and good will that may be emblematic of our enjoyment of more lasting happiness in a better world.



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